

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PFOR, NP, IN
SUBJECT: NEPAL: GOI AND JANATA PARTY PRESIDENT REPLY TO TULSI
GIRI'S CHARGES

REF: KATHMANDU 2151

1. FOLLOWING IS THE TEXT OF THE MAY 25 STATEMENT OF AN MEA
SPOKESMAN REPLYING TO THE CHARGES OF INSUAN INTERFERENCE IN
THE INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF NEPAL MADE BY NEPALESE PRIME MINISTER
TULSI GIRI (REFTEL):

A. "WE HAVE NOTED WITH REGRET AND UNHAPPINESS THE REPORTED
STATEMENT OF THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEPAL, DR. TULSI GIRI,
MADE AT A SPECIALLY CONVENED PRESS CONFERENCE AT KATHMANDU ON
MAY 24. IT IS PARTICULARLY UNFORTUNATE THAT THE PRIME MINISTER
OF A COUNTRY WITH WHOM WE ARE LINKED BY TRADITION, CULTURE,
RELIGION AND THE CLOSEST POSSIBLE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC TIES
SHOULD DEEM IT APPROPRIATE TO SO MISUNDERSTAND THE POLICIES
OF THE NEW GOVERNMENT OF INDIA AND INDEED THE DEMOCRATIC FREEDOM
WITHIN OUR SYSTEM. THE STATEMENTS OF DR. DIRI AT HISS PRESS
CONFERENCE HAVE CERTAIN INGREDIENTS WHICH COULD LEAD TO
AVOIDABLE MISUNDERSTANDINGS.

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B. "DURING THE RECENT VISIT OF HIS MAJESTY THE KING, THE
PRIME MINISTER AND THE FOREIGN MINISTER OF INDIA HAD EXTENDED
WARM ASSURANCES OF FRIENDSHIP FOR NEPAL, AND OF NON-INTERFERENCE
IN NEPAL'S INTERNAL AFFAIRS. IT HAD BEEN CLARIFIED THAT INDIA
WANTED TO PROMOTE COOPERATION ON THE BASIS OF MUTUAL RESPECT
WITH OUR NEIGHBOURS. THE FOREIGN MINISTER HAD CATEGORICALLY

STATED AS RECENTLY AS MAY 9 IN THIS CONTEXT WHILE REFERRING TO MR. B. P. KOIRALA, THAT THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA HAS NO INTENTION TO INTERFERE IN NEPAL'S INTERNAL AFFAIRS. IN FACT, WE WERE GRATIFIED TO LEARN THAT THE NEPALESE GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN HAD WELCOMED THE STATEMENT OF THE FOREIGN MINISTER. IT THEREFORE CAME TO US AS SURPRISE THAT THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEPAL SHOULD CHARACTERIZE EXPRESSIONS OF ANXIETY EXPRESSED BY THE FREE PRESS IN INDIA, AS A KIND OF DELIBERATE HATE NEPAL CAMPAIGN.

C. "IT IS FULLY KNOWN THAT THE PRESS IN INDIA IS ENTIRELY FREE. OF LATE EVEN THE PUBLIC MEDIA ARE NOT DIRECTED OR CONTROLLED IN THEIR NEWS REPORTING. WE IN INDIA WANT A RELATIONSHIP OF TRUST AND RESPECT WITH OUR NEIGHBOURS. JUST AS WE RESPECT OTHER COUNTRIES AND THEIR GOVERNMENTS, WE HOPE OUR COUNTRY AND POLICIES WOULD BE OBJECTIVELY UNDERSTOOD. WE WILL CONTINUE TO WORK TOWARDS THE DEVELOPMENT OF HEALTHY AND GOOD NEIGHBOURLY RELATIONS WITH NEPAL, NOTWITHSTANDING THE STATEMENT MADE BY THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEPAL."

KPM AT A MAY 25 PRESS CONFERENCE, JANATA PARTY PRESIDENT CHANDRA SHEKHAR REPLIED TO GIRI'S STATEMENT THAT CHANDRA SHEKHAR HAD EMBARRASSED NEPAL BECAUSE HE HAD DISCLOSED HIS DISCUSSION WITH KING BIRENDRA. GIRI, ACCORDING TO THE INDIAN PRESS, CHARACTERIZED CHANDRA SHEKHAR'S TRIP AS A MISSION OF "QUIET DIPLOMACY." THE JANATA LEADER DENIED THE ALLEGATIONS THAT THERE WAS A HATE-NEPAL CAMPAIGN IN INDIA BUT SAID THERE WAS SUBSTANTIAL PUBLIC OPINION HERE WHICH WAS NOT ONLY IN SYMPATHY WITH B. P. KOIRALA BUT ALSO WITH THE CAUSE OF LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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CIVIL LIBERTIES AND HUMAN RIGHTS EVERYWHERE. HE SAID THAT NEITHER THE GOI NOR THE RULING PARTY SHOULD LIMIT SUCH SENTIMENTS IN A FREE SOCIETY. CHANDRA SHEKHAR DENIED THAT HE HAD ISSUED A STATEMENT ABOUT HIS VISIT TO NEPAL BEYOND SAYING THAT HE HAD GONE THERE ON A PRIVATE VISIT. HE ALSO SAID THAT HE HAD NOT ENGAGED IN ANY "SILENT DIPLOMACY" WITH THE KING,

AND THAT HIS TRIP HAD NOT BEEN CLEARED WITH EITHER THE PRIME MINISTER OR THE FOREIGN MINISTER.

3. COMMENT: WHILE THE GOI'S REPLY TO THE NEPALESE IS CLEAR IN STATING THAT GIRI DOES NOT UNDERSTAND DEMOCRATIC FREEDOMS, ESPECIALLY OF THE PRESS, AS THEY NOW EXIST IN INDIA, THE STATEMENT IS NOTEWORTHY FOR ITS RESTRAINT AND EMPHASIS ON THE DESIRE TO HAVE GOOD RELATIONS. CHANDRA SHEKHAR, HOWEVER, MAKES IT CLEAR THAT PUBLIC CONCERN WITHIN INDIA OVER HUMAN RIGHTS IN NEPAL IS LEGITIMATE. WE BELIEVE THAT PEOPLE LIKE CHANDRA SHEKHAR AND THE SOCIALISTS IN THE JANATA PARTY WILL IN NO WAY BE PUT OFF BY TULSI GIRI'S BLAST.

GOHEEN

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